

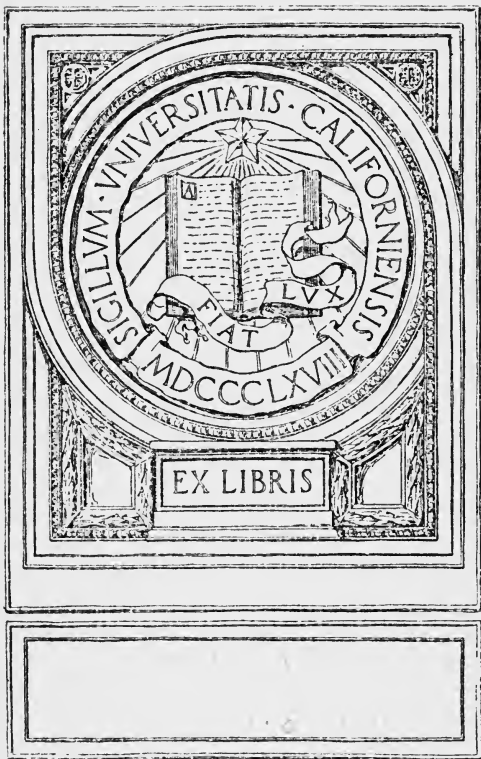
YOUTH RIDING

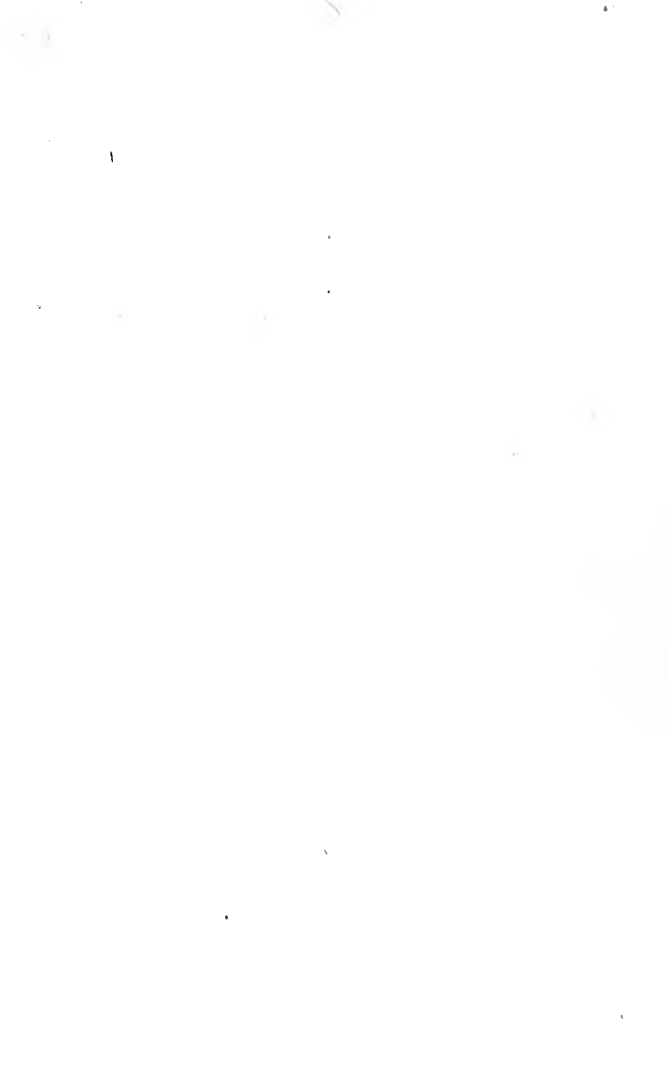
MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

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YOUTH RIDING



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TORONTO

YOUTH RIDING

LYRICS

BY

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES

Author of "The Drums in Our Street"

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1919

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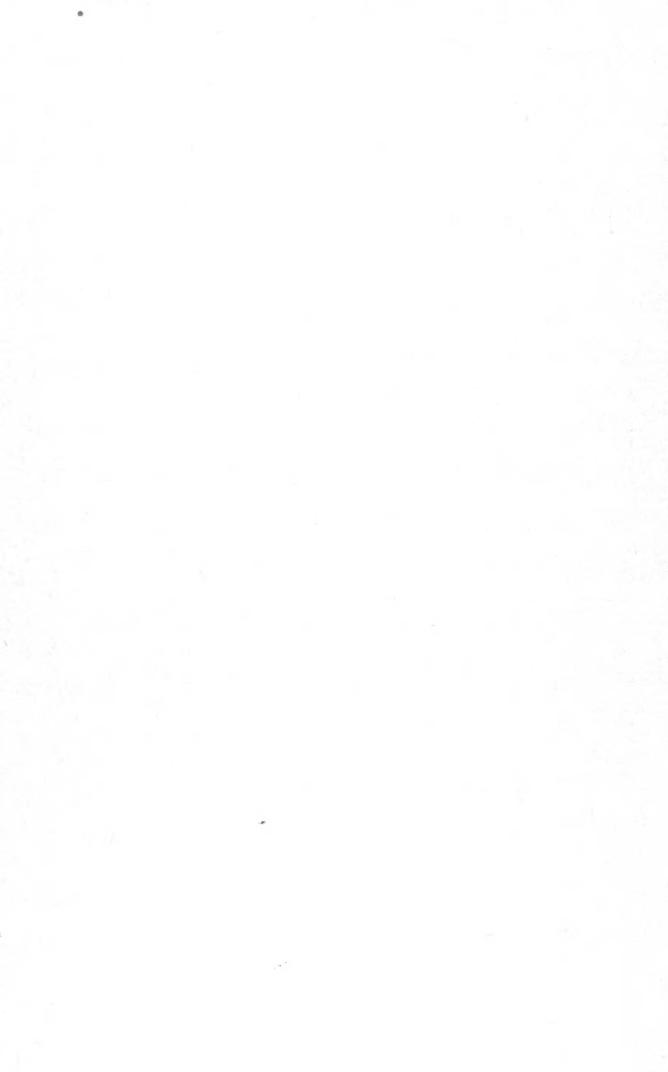
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PART I

YOUTH RIDING

YOUTH RIDING

I will not bow my head
To listen to the dead.
I am alive and I am young,
There is gladness on my tongue,
And my lips are red.

There is red within my blood,
There is red beneath my cheek,
There is a flood
Of red that makes me sing and speak
And shout with youth —

I shall never bow my head
And sit and listen to the dead.

I am young, I am young!
I am fleet!

Youth Riding

I am fresh and living and sweet.

They reach out hands for the joy I hold,

They who are old, they who are old!

Old in heart, and old in years,

Old by right of shrinkings and fears.

I give them joy with my two hands thrust

Out to their hands, for they are dust,

They are dust and they are mold,

They who are old.

They are dust falling under my feet.

And what I have I will not withhold.

They take what I give, and greedily

Pluck at my gown for the youth they
see —

At my throat, on my hands — I loose
each gem,

And give to them —

But well I know

To give is to keep, they can not hold

The youth I stretch to them. They are old.

Youth Riding

I have the step of a god, the swift
Sweep of a deer, and a swallow's lift.
I can go where the tree winds go;
I can run where the quick winds run.

I walk safe with the talisman
That you may snatch from Spring if you can!
My mouth shall be red and my cheek be red,
My hair shall be gold upon my head,
My laugh shall be new as the first laugh
 heard,
My heart shall be clear as a pool unstirred,
I shall never grow old and change!
I shall be all that is wild and strange,
All that sets the thought aglow
To have, to snatch, to glimpse, to go,
To hear, to snare, to make, to know!
I shall be what is beyond the white
Horizon's line, and what the night

Youth Riding

Holds in its lips for the tired to hear.
I who am youth shall be always dear!

Those alone are slaves who choose.
— We who wish, may have life to use!
Others Change may traffic among,
Others Change may choose and buy,
Not I, not I!

I bear a sword, I bear a shield,
I have a spear to wield.
I shall go over the world and kill,
Tread and tramp and blot and still
All that is wrong, though set on high,
I who am youth, and cannot die!

All who are old have need to fear!
They shall not cumber
And keep the earth for a place to slumber.

Youth Riding

— I am youth and I come alone!
I will pull you from your throne,
I will pull you from your place,
You who are staid and calm of face!
I look within you and I see
Well you have need to shrink from me!
I am a rebel and I ride
Wherever there are things to hide,
I pull them into the light; and slay
All that is old and mean and gray.
I shall snatch, I shall seek,
I shall find, too, and destroy!
I am youth, I am youth,
I am joy!

Ruthless to myself and the weak,
Tireless to rear and build, and seek,
I shall not shrink from a lonely land
Or grope with my hand for another hand
Or a staff to hold

Youth Riding

Like those who cower
And like those who are old.
Only my own heart I hear.
Only my own strength I heed.
I have no lack! I have no fear!
I have no need!

I shall yet kill evil, I
Who am youth, and cannot die!

THE DAY BEFORE APRIL

The day before April

Alone, alone,

I walked in the woods

And I sat on a stone.

I sat on a broad stone

And sang to the birds.

The tune was God's making

But I made the words.

BORROWER

I sing of sorrow.

I sing of weeping.

I have no sorrow.

I only borrow

From some to-morrow

Where it lies sleeping,

Enough of sorrow

To sing of weeping.

MARRIAGE

Back from the dusty church,
The words all said
And the strange kiss given,
We walked down the long lane of Fourteenth
Street,
(Our shoulders touching home-bound clerks,
And shoppers, straggly shawls about their
heads),
To the Hungarian restaurant where for
weeks
You had courted me between the soup and
steak.

To-night

The mirrors all about the walls seemed only
To show your face to me, and mine to you;
Wherever I might look, I found your eyes,

Youth Riding

You mine, and as we gazed
We quite forgot that earth held other things;
Until our friendly waiter, twinkling-eyed,
Came bustling back, a link from heaven to
earth.

Three blocks of windy street,
Three flights of stairs,
And then we stood
Before your studio door.
You turned the key
And groping in the dark, you found a candle
And pouring tallow in a little pool
Upon the mantelpiece, you stood it there
In its tall whiteness.

There was rain outside;
The skylight hummed and rattled with its
coming.
A few faint sounds blew up from the loud
distance;

Youth Riding

The grunt of a Salvation Army's drum
Blent with the noise
Of women's voices roughened by the night
Singing from hearts the night has roughened
 too —
And softened.

The street flung up its sounds against our
 window,
But could not force the fortress of our
 thoughts,
Your thoughts of me, and mine of you, old,
 new,
And riotous —
And frightened —

We, who had always been such open com-
 rades,
Now were half afraid
To touch each other's hands,

Youth Riding

To see each other's faces in the dim
And holy dusk.

We thought of God. I prayed to Him,
As I had prayed when first you said, "I love
you,"
The same quick, breathless, little broken
prayer,
"God, oh, don't let us hurt each other, ever."

The portraits you had painted were about us,
A ghostly company of friends.
Life seemed all ends;
Ends of things finished, ends of things begun,
Ends, ends —
No safe and placid middles.

Because the silence choked from utterance
All other words, we talked of daily things,

Youth Riding

Your order for a cartoon, and the story
Long overdue, that I must mail to-morrow —

And then the silence
Laid its hands even on these commonplaces.

We looked at one another gravely,
Shy children that our mothers, Youth and
 Life,
Had brought to see each other, and to play
Together.

Two startled children
Permitted by the gold ring on my hand
To stay and talk there in the dusk alone
And for the first time not to think of clocks
But if we liked, watch night's dark bud bloom
 dawn.

The silence grew and filled the room's dim
 corners.

Youth Riding

The candle on the mantel burned its life out
And its flame died, and all the room was
dark;

And on the skylight fell the black loud rain;
And in the world there was no other sound
But your breathing
And the beating of my heart.

Then in the dark
You stumbled to me
And caught me by the shoulders
And laid your mouth on mine.
And all the hunger of our lives for life,
And all my hunger for you, yours for me,
Surged up in us, love caught us as a storm
A helpless ship, and beat upon us; joy
Rose like a tossing sea, and swallowed us.

SONG ✕

We cannot die, for loveliness
Is an eternal thing.

If God, his dim old eyes to bless,
Brings back the Spring,

Shall he not bring again your grace,
Your laughter, your warm hair?
And how can he destroy my face
Your kiss made fair?

TO L. E. D.

You are alive, and I;
And that is why
We reached out over the cluttered dead
And touched hands and were comforted.
Over the dead who live in rows,
(Like houses all alike to the eye
Except for a number to tell them by).
Who live in rows, and think in rows.
Who feel in rows, and, still in rows,
Will sometime even more surely die,
And in a well-kept graveyard lie
In acquiescent measured rows.

But *your* thoughts were like unclipped hedges;
Your thoughts like leaves grew past the
edges

Youth Riding

Of all the boundaries men could make.
Beauty was in you like a thirst
That naught in life would ever slake.
I saw within your searching eyes
The sleepless nights that had made you wise ;
I saw within your face the same
Questioning that from the first
Has lived in me, too, and has given
Me all the goals for which I've striven.
I saw your unrest like a flame
Burning little things away
That might have grown within you . . .

They,

The dead, who in the room discussed
Trivial things, as people must,
Though shrewd their eyes, could never see
The hidden thing in you and me,
The little spark of life that drew
You close to me and me to you.

SNOW

Your kiss is on my face
Like the first snow
Upon a summer place.

Bewildered by that wonder
The grasses tremble under
The thing they do not know.
I tremble even so.

A GRACE

Bread

Is your hand upon my head;

Wine

Is your warm mouth pressed to mine.

Let us thank the gods who give

Bread and wine that we may live.

MY MOTHER SAID — ✎

“ Love will be a sword to you,”

My mother said —

“ Not a pillow

Behind your head,

Not a staff

Below your hand,

Not a stream

In a brown land;

Love will never

Be a breast

Where you, sore beset,

May rest.

“ What you have felt

You will forget.

To old-time joy,

Youth Riding

To old-time fret
Eyes you will shut,
Ears you will seal.
You will bow,
And you will kneel.
Grass beneath,
Sky overhead —
What you possessed
You will count as dead.

“ You will give all to love as his
due:
And for that will love be a sword
to you —”
My mother said.

ARTIST DEATH

It is Death that makes the sun so red,
 The moon so round:
It is Death that makes the blue and yellow
 Spring from the ground,
To catch our senses and confound.

It is Death's hand that stirs the water
 And lays the white
Young moon there quivering with pain
 For our delight,
As we walk out at night.

It is Death that makes the wind so fair
 That turns a tree.
It is Death that makes your eyes so sweet,
 Your step so free;
And makes you fond of me.

THE DOOR

The littlest door, the inner door,
I swing it wide.
Now in my heart there is no more
To hide.

The farthest door — the latch at last
Is lifted; see.
I kept the little fortress fast.
— Be good to me.

A WOMAN'S SONG ✕

I can love you without caring
What is the end of my love's faring;

I can love you without asking,
Without seeking, without tasking;

I can love you giving all
That I hold to you in thrall;

I can love you without being
Wise, or careful, or far-seeing:

I can love without comparing
Yours and my love. Joyous — daring —

Would you have me love you so?
It is the only way I know.

COMMUNION

Your lips upon my white
Arm in the slow moonlight
Are like a spoken prayer.
My loosened hair
Is over all your cheek.
If you or I should speak
Our eyes' words would be stilled.
A breath is in the room
As though a rose found bloom;
A sound is on our ears
As though a wild bird trilled
Far off, in gardens dim
With dusk of fading years.
If God should stand before
Our miracle-flung door,
There would be no surprise
In our calm welcoming eyes.

SWORD ✦

Hold no words back,
Love, from me,
Fearing one
A sword may be.

Need for choosing
Words would fall
On my heart
Worst sword of all.

FREE

Over and over

I tell the sky:

I am free — I!

Over and over I tell the sea:

— I am free!

Over and over I tell my lover

I am free, free!

Over and over.

But when the night comes black and cold,
I who am young, with fear grow old;
And I know, when the world is clear of sound,
I am bound — bound —

SEA GULLS

“ I am the white gull overhead ! ”

To my love I said ;

And stretched my arms and cried

To the gull's cry.

And I shall have no freedom till I die.

I shall know never lift of sky

Or sweep of sea.

I am chained cruelly by his love of me.

FIRE OF THE SUN

Passionate children of the sun —
You are one and I am one.
A piece of his fire burns still in you;
And in me, too.

Lower your lids and veil your eyes.
Let us pretend that we are wise;
That we are very wise, and that you
Can smother that fire, and that I can, too.

Let us forget that we are young,
And have wanting in us. Let us go
Walking cautiously and slow
All these folk among.

(Fire of the sun, smother, smolder!)
Let us pretend that we are older

Youth Riding

And that we are calm, and do not know.
(Fire of the sun, burn low!)

Let us laugh, and let us sing,
That will be a pleasant thing.

Let us look at life, and weigh,
And scrutinize it well, and say,
“ We think we will not buy to-day.”

TRAPS

A trap's a very useful thing:
Nature in our path sets Spring.
It is a trap to catch us two,
It is planned for me and you.
Do not think my cheeks are warm,
Do not wonder if my arm
Would make a pillow sweet for rest.
Not to speak or glance is best —
To smother the thing that calls so clear
Deep in our thoughts at the spring of the
 year.
If we stop, if we look, if we speak, if we
 care,
Spring will catch us unaware,
Will put us in a house with four
Chairs, a table, and a door

Youth Riding

To enslave us evermore.
She means to tie you firm and tight
To a desk from dawn till night,
To make you strain and make you sweat
Till you forget, till you forget
All that is good and fine and high.
She will give you fear to keep till you die.
She means to tear my flesh to make
A child to steal my hours awake,
To break my hours asleep, to be
Slayer of the youth in me,
Slayer of the youth in you,
Slayer of that which makes us sing.
— Let us never look at Spring;
It is a trap to catch us two.

THE APPLE TREE SAID:

My apples are heavy upon me.

It was the Spring;

And proud was I of my petals,

Nor dreamed this thing:

That joy could grow to a burden,

Or beauty could be

Changed from snow-light to heavy,

To humble me.

TOYS

We were happy.
Now I weep;
Pain is an easy
Toy to keep.

Fragile joy
Breaks in a day;
Pain will last
Till I tire of play.

VINTAGE

Heartbreaks that are too new
Can not be used to make
Beauty that will startle.
That takes an old heartbreak.

Old heartbreaks are old wine.
Too new to pour is mine.

LINKS

Nature threw a mist around, and trapped us
two:
Made me seem a fair and lovely thing to
you;
Made you seem a tall man desirable to own.
— She has taken Spring away and left us two
alone.

There is never mist now — that is Nature's
way.

Where the love words all are said, what is
left to say?

While we two were touching Spring, tasting
it and smelling,

Nature trapped us neatly — and where's the
use rebelling?

GHOUL

Love is dead.

But I look back from where I stand —
(From fear I fled.)

But I steal back and snatch the pain
To make one little song again;
I cut his finger from his hand
That I may have the heavy ring —
I seize a memory from the dead,
That I may sing.

RUST

Iron left in the rain
And fog and dew
With rust is covered.— Pain
Rusts into beauty, too.

I know full well that this is so:
— I had a heartbreak long ago.

THIS IS THE BITTEREST THING TO
KNOW

You are dead; dead, and there is laughter
still.

You are dead; dead, and on the floor below
Those lovers kiss and cuff; and lovers will
Play through their crazy game we used to
know,

Play through their silly game; and youth will
be

In all the men whom I shall pass and see,
In all the young girls chatting — *and in me.*
I, too, will laugh again and lift my head,
Forgetting you, to hear some stranger's call.
This is the bitterest thing to know of all:
*I, too, will laugh, though you, my love, are
dead.*

PART II

A DAY

I

SUN PRAYER ✕

Sun,
Lay your hand upon my head.
I shall be kind to-day.
Sun, make me kind!
And lovely too —
My eyes,
And cheeks. And make me wise.
I bow my head
Low, low —
Lay your hand upon it, so.

Youth Riding

II

SHADOWS

Lean lower, Tree!
Give your beauty all to me.

Have two arms to reach the sky.
Eyes I have
And hands to press
Lazy buds apart, and feet
To touch the stream with,
Mouth to sing
And ears to hear the gray brook's tone.
These I have, these only. Tree,
Give your shadows all to me!
I have no shadows of my own.

Youth Riding

III

WIND PRAYER

Tree-wind

Sea-wind

Wind that whirls the sand,

Loud wind

Cloud wind

Wind of swaying water,

Let me hold your hand,

Let me be your daughter!

Give me what I need,

Wind of leaf and seed —

Say your magic wisdom

Over, slow, to me,

Wind that rules the sea!

Wind that rules the grasses!

— The wind passes —

Youth Riding

IV

RAIN

Rain falls on the grass

And on my feet.

The drops are cool and round. The
 clover, oh

How sharp it greets me! And the trees
 bend low

Beneath the raindrops.

Faster

Louder

Rounder

Colder

The mad drops strike.

If we were older

We should be wise and shrink from rain.

But because we are young, the grass and I
Hold out our arms for its pain.

Youth Riding

V

THE GRAPES

The grapes are round and dark
Like eyes that mark
Each thing I do.
The sun has made them sweet and round;
The wind will pull them to the ground.
— I shall die, too.

VI

DUSK

Dusk,
Wrap your mantle
About us both.
I am tired too,
And cold, and full of sleep.
And keep

Youth Riding

Your arm around me. Day
Is far away
And night has not yet called us. Let us
pull
The mantle closer, Dusk, O beautiful!

FOREST DANCE

I shall dance in the forest,
And all my dancing shall be for you —
For you, who are very far away.

The wind shall make
A tune for my feet.
It must be low;
It must be sweet —
For it is for you.
Sweeter, lower;
A little slower —

Now I raise my foot and knee;
And spurn the ground; and leap; and see
The sky like a scarf to strain to, touch,

Youth Riding

Feel, and be part of, and claim, and clutch,
And wave in my dance! It is a fine
Silken scarf, and it is mine!

It is made for my dance!

Wind! Louder! Faster!

Be confusion! Be disaster!

Now I crouch, and now I run,
And dance, and dance, and catch the sun
In one outstretched arm, and fling it high
Back, against the wall of the air!

Now it is caught in the scarf I wear!

Now it is caught in my scarf, the sky,
Like a jewelled pin, like a yellow stone!
It, too, is my own!

Now I shall trail my scarf, and tread
A stately march, and droop my head,
Mimicking flowers, and they will all
Tremble with anger. I shall let fall
My scarf, and now I shall dance the word

Youth Riding

That is in my heart when I think of you.

(It is a burning word, and holy.

It is like a wakened bird.)

Wild, and mad is my dance! I turn

Swaying, trembling, like a tree,

Like a tree that starts to burn

In a forest, that feels the fire creep slowly

Up its branches, into its bark,

And sees its own smoke, like a dark

Cloud that shuts it out from the known

Trees with whom it has leaved and grown.

Caught in flames, it shivers to see

Itself a flame, that was a tree!

So I dance! Wind, sing, sing!

Louder, wilder, faster fling

Down your music! I drop the sky

Beneath my feet, and I tread it under.

I hold my cupped hands, full of wonder,

High, high —

Youth Riding

I dance in the forest,
And all my dancing is for you,
Who are far away, and will never know.

DANCE

God's in me when I dance
God, making Spring
Out of his thoughts
And building worlds
By wishing.

God

Laughing at his own

Queer fancies,

Standing awed,

And sobbing;

Musing,

Dreaming,

Throbbing;

Commanding;

Creating —

God's in me

When I dance.

SPRING DAY

I close my eyes.
The whole world dies.
I open them and I create
A tree, a falling fence, a gate,
A pine cone fallen from the tree —
And me.

Against the tree I lean my cheek
And as I stand and do not speak
I think the heart that throbs in me
Is underneath the bark, its beat
Fills my cold face with sudden heat;
The sap that comes from rain and sun
To fill the tree and make it live
Is in my veins, I feel it run

Youth Riding

Through hands and temples radiantly;
And like the tree I lean upon
I too am a tree!
I raise my head and see
The world, and it is sweet,
And sunny to my feet
And green, and rustling. High
I lift my arms! The sky
Is just beyond my reach!
I understand the speech
Of squirrel and weed and stone.
When I am grown
A little taller still
I shall see past the hill
To where the great world ends.
The keen winds are my friends,
And God, too, and the grass.
Above, there pass
White shapes that change and flow
And blend and break and go

Youth Riding

Beyond my eyes. Below
The grasses dream and sway.
And I am even as they.

And then I draw apart and gaze
Upon the hard hill's mystic haze.
I am a girl again; the tree
Is long world distant now. I see
No homely thing that I have known.
The earth has vanished, tree and stone.
I am alone, I am alone!
All space and all eternity
Has held, and holds, but God and me.
I am afraid of what I see.

And then I close my eyes, and then
When I open them again
Out of nothing I create
A tree, a falling fence, a gate —

A GIRL'S SONGS

I

I have three rings on my hand:

One is set in blue

And one has chrysoprase

And one I wear for you.

They are friends to me,

They keep me company

All the white night through.

And when I think of death

And how without a breath

The house is, and the night,

My three rings clinging tight,

Are warm upon my hand —

My three round rings,

Youth Riding

They are living things;
And they understand.
“Don't be afraid,” they say, and I
Pretend I would not fear to die.

II

My watch beneath my pillow white
Whispers to me all the night.
My heart beats and my watch ticks
And the fear of dying pricks
Like a pin God holds, and he
Stabs my brain with it gleefully.
My watch ticks and my heart beats
And cool and smooth are the linen sheets
And I am alone, and the house is still,
And there are stars past the windowsill.

III X

I should like to be a nun
I think sometimes —

Youth Riding

A nun, to fast, hear chimes,
And wear black gowns with folds; and
 keys;
And know the words of rosaries,

To have no long hair: and to give
Obedience while I live
To other women, and to walk
As though I were older, and to light
Candles at saints' feet, and talk
About himself to God at night.

Sometimes I think I'd rather be
Sitting like this, and daintily
Eating wafers with my tea.

MOMENTS

I

LOITERER

Wait for me, Life: Don't go so fast:
There is so much I want to see:
Look, Life, we passed
Another little child like me.
Why must we always hurry so?
I want to stop and say "Hello."

II

KIN

I am kin to things that fly;
I am kin to things that run;
To things that blot and dark the sky;

Youth Riding

To things that play and touch the sun;
And to things that leap and cry.

No kin to other folk am I —

III

THE BLURRED TWIG

Spring has come into the park, and into me.
I look as high as the roofs reach, and I see
That the branches are blurred, they are not
sharp-cut and clear;
As they were a day ago. I am sorry it is
here,
Spring, for it means I have lived another
year,
And so must die a whole year sooner. You
Will have to die a whole year sooner, too.

Youth Riding

IV

THE DANCING DRESS

My little dancing dress is sad,
It is so long since we have been
Very close of kin.

Together once we used to bow;
We are only strangers now.
In very lonesome folds it lies:
I look at it with casual eyes.

Once at my slightest touch it stirred;
It quivered at my body's word:
And it and I were only one.

We were a shadow and its sun;
We were a nest and its westless bird;
We were wine in its glass;

Youth Riding

We were wind and grass;
I was a bud and it the bough.
— These things are all over now.

It is long since we have been
Very close of kin —

V

OUR STREET

The moon was falling into our street
 Out of a tree,
And we walked slow, and the night was sweet,
 And there were three
Stars huddled together in the space
That is the sky, and in your face
Was a little laughing, a little pain
And the fear that there could not be again
A night so dear as this night had been.
And we said Good-by, and I went in.

Youth Riding

And you walked away; and the church
clock spoke.

And the moon fell into our street and
broke.

VI

THE FRAME

I am a picture in a frame,
The frame is made of thoughts in you;
It is black like fear, and red like flame.
I can not burst it and come through
Its narrow edges, and walk free.
— I am here in a frame for all to see —

VII

REBEL

I do not want to be a leaf
When I am dead;
Or a red rose.
I must, though, I suppose!

THE DROWNED MEN

I heard the dead men talking

Beneath the sea.

On the gray sand

My lover spoke to me:

“Your face is dearer than the world,” he
said.

He said, “If I were dead

And you came by, I still would stir and wake
For my love’s sake.

Give me your heart,” he said. I sat unheed-
ing.

And laughed, and did not listen to his plead-
ing.

And woven through his speech I heard
The drowned men’s secrets, every word.

Youth Riding

One

Tangled his hands in sea-weed,

And said,

“ So was her hair.”

One held a buried jewel to his eyes,

And said,

“ She was more fair.”

A third

Whose voice was young,

Said, “ In the sweet sea-sounds

It seemed just then

That I her laughter caught.”

One stretched his hand to close upon

A trembling, tiny fish

That darted through it,

And vanished, and he sighed,

“ So was her thought.”

Youth Riding

I heard the drowned men talking
Where ruined ships,
And sea-things keep them grisly company.

And through their words my lover's wove.

“ Give me your lips,”

He said again to me.

“ I will be constant evermore,” he said.

He said, “ If I were dead

I still would think of you

The ages through,

And speak your name

And wait until you came.”

And then, because I knew

As he did not, that what he said was true,

I lifted up my lips and kissed him too.

PART III

IN MY ROOM I READ AND WRITE

In my room I read and write.

Somewhere men cry out and fight,
Struggling for the thing they need.
Somewhere women reach and take
What time withholds, and wrench and make
Days into something odd and new.
They say words which are wild and true.
They bend life like a rod of glass
That they have heated in the flame
Of their wills. They would know shame
If they did not bring to pass
Mighty things for beauty's sake
And truth's. And they will never sheathe
The sword they fight with, while they breathe.
Shelter, clothing, food and ease

Youth Riding

May not beat them to their knees;
Need of touch, and word, and rest
Will not hold them from the quest.
All, in good time, after stress,
As they know well, they shall possess.

Somewhere men and women take
What time withholds, and wrench and make
Life into something odd and new.
Women seek for what is true.
Under wrong men turn and fight.
— In my room I read and write.

YOUTH'S A CLEAN SWORD

Youth's a clean sword;
 'Twill hew at wrong;
Youth's a keen sword,
 And strong.

Youth's in my hand;
 And I will thrust
And thrust, before
 It turns to rust.

VASSAL *x*

My soul a king is;
His vassal I.
I fight here shrilling
His battle cry.

His wars I wage him,
My booty bring.
— Forth, Death, defend you!
The King! The King!

BEGGAR

Three coins of grief!

Life, passerby!

Stop! Hear my cry!

A beggar I!

Three coins of grief!

That I may buy,

Toothsome and sweet,

Wisdom to eat!

THE DEAD MAKE RULES

The dead make rules, and I obey.
I, too, shall be dead some day.

Youth and maid, who, past my death,
Have, within your nostrils, breath,

I pray you, for my own pain's sake,
Break the rules that I shall make!

THE SHOVELS OF THE DEAD

My mother's made in the old mold, and does
not understand.

She never was an exile out of any land.

She never was a rebel that railed against a
king.

My mother never felt or dreamed or con-
quered anything.

She kept the pathways made her, by shovels
of the dead.

She never tramped the white snow nor won-
dered where it led.

She never wished a new thing, she thinks it
sad and wild

That there should be such strange thoughts
in the white mind of her child.

She has a gown of gold cloth and maids to
come and go,

Youth Riding

She rides abroad in carriages, and does not
care or know

That down the lane a woman keeps house
with wifely care

For seven squalid children and a memory and
despair.

She wishes me to dance and let the young
men call

And speak to me of opera and nothing else
at all;

And if a dirty artist or a shabby bard came
in

And talked of heights and beauty, and life,
she'd think that sin.

There are eager girls who sweep the world
without our door.

There are men who dream and toil and sing
and serve the poor;

Youth Riding

Who serve the rich and poor with dreams
and soup and bread.

— I sit here with my mother and chat at tea,
instead.

I will leave my mother's house, I will take
the road;

I will carry nothing but a heavy load,
No loads that are easy, as the load my
mother bears;

But something that will make my back bend
like theirs.

.

But my mother has no life at all except in me.
How can I she bore in pain still bring her
agony?

Bow her head and dim her eyes to weeping
night and day?

I am all her future, and I love her and will
stay.

THE DREAM-BEARER

Where weary folk toil, black with smoke,
And hear but whistles scream,
I went, all fresh from dawn and dew,
To carry them a dream.

I went to bitter lanes and dark,
Who once had known the sky,
To carry them a dream — and found
They had more dreams than I.

AN APOLOGY FOR POETS

The bird is sad
And so it cries.
Men are silent
Who are wise;

They hide the griefs
That at them pull.
But they make
Nothing beautiful.

PART IV

TO OTHER MARYS

Christ said, " Mary," as he walked within
the garden

The morning that he rose from death,
calm and free of pain;

The wounds in his hands and his side no
longer burned him.

He that once had been a man was a God
again.

Christ said, " Mary " as he walked within
the garden.

All in his triumphing, back from the dead,
With the wind upon his cheek, while the
world was new to him,

" Mary " was the first name he ever said.

The first Mary God chose, he looked about
the world for her

Youth Riding

And saw her walking with the maids of
Galilee;

— She stood beside a clumsy-nailed cross
above a hillside,

And saw the babe on it she had held at her
knee.—

Christ praised another Mary whom the
saints rebuked for wastefulness;

For he understood them well, all Marys
of his day,

Yes, and of to-day, too, Mary staid and
caring,

Marys wild and home-loving — it was his
way.

Martha and Lazarus talked with Christ at
supper-time,

Martha and Lazarus, of crops and folk
and wars;

Youth Riding

But while the food was cleared away, low
by the doorstep

It was Mary spoke to him, when there
were stars.

Not of crops and gossip, not of work and
neighbors —

Christ and Mary talked about the wishing
to be good

And the easy falling, and the new beginnings,
And the way the moon looked, low above
the wood.

Christ said, “ Mary,” as he walked within
the garden;

Startled, Mary Magdalene raised her tear-
stained face.

That was very long ago, in a far-off country,
In a far-off country, and a foreign place.

Youth Riding

• Still each year at Easter-time do we think
again of her,
And the other Marys who are dead in the
earth,
Who are dead long ago, but who loved and
tended him.
When our Lord was a man, and felt of
tears and mirth.

All the Marys of the world, let us pray to-
gether now,
Mary Schwartz, and Mary Brown, and
Mary Rosenstein,
Little Mary Donnelly, Mary Holt and Mary
Hull,
Mary Olsen, Mary Morse, all in a line.
Since it is the Easter-time, and little bells
are ringing,
Let us walk in still pride, with lifting of
the head,

Youth Riding

For when he had risen from the grave, as
all the world knows,
“Mary” was the first name that God
ever said.

A BALLAD OF MARY

Joseph's words were kindly words,
Joseph's hands were kind,
And the thoughts were kindly thoughts
Went across his mind.

Was no shining round his head;
Wore no raiment white;
And his words no music had,
And his face no light.

Joseph smoothed her pillow down,
Held a cup of mead.
Joseph's ways were thoughtful ways
For a woman's need.

As upon her stable-bed
Yellow-sweet with hay;

Youth Riding

With deep eyes that none could read
Stilly Mary lay.

Slow she smiled and grateful-wise,
Let no half-look tell
Joseph seemed a sober man
After Gabriel.

AFTER EASTER

“ It was here he used to sit,
And here he slept;
And when he heard my brother'd died
I mind how he wept.

“ Here was his low bench,
And here his bed,”
To the neighbor women
Martha said.

“ He liked the talking,
And he liked more
To sit silently
Looking at the floor.”

Youth Riding

Martha spoke the neighbors

With pride in her tone.

But Mary in the garden

Was crying alone.

CLOISTERED

To-night the little girl-nun died.

Her hands were laid

Across her breast; the last sun tried

To kiss her quiet braid;

And where the little river cried,

Her grave was made.

The little girl-nun's soul, in awe,

Went silently

To where her brother Christ she saw,

Under the Living Tree;

He sighed, and his face seemed to draw

Her tears, to see.

He laid his hands on her hands mild,

And gravely blessed;

Youth Riding

“ Blind, they that kept you so,” He smiled,
With tears unguessed.

“ Saw they not Mary held a child
Upon her breast? ”

REMINISCENCES

The other side of Death, one night,
 Walked out a youth and maid;
And they reviewed (as children might
 A game that they had played)
The battle they had died to fight,
 The cost they both had paid.

“ I heard — or seemed to hear,” she said,
 “ Far voices, seemed to see
St. Michael point me to a sword
 To set my country free;
With men, a man I fought,” her head
 Dropped forward wearily.

The boy assented with a nod,
 “ Like me,” he said, “ beguiled.

Youth Riding

A dove — a voice from heaven — odd
My fancies were, and wild!
I thought I was the son of God,"
He said, and, rueful, smiled.

IN THE PARK

I had forgotten children felt so sweet.
One sees them on the street,
And passes by with only a faint start
Of pleasure in their being. For they start
Through our gray lives like sea-gulls in gray
 skies,
And we, like fisher people, watch with eyes
Made by long years indifferent. But to-day
It was Spring everywhere, even in the park.
I sat upon the ground, and a book lay
Before me. And I read; then watched the
 dark
And light run through the grass. There
 were children calling,
And hiding, romping, falling.

At length a little group came playing near
 me;

Youth Riding

I thought that they might fear me,
And so I kept my eyes down. Suddenly
Forgetting them. I raised my head — to see
The close face of a child;
I smiled,
And she smiled back, and came
A little nearer me, and asked my name.
“Mary,” I said, “what’s yours?” “It’s
Geraldine,
Named for my aunt. But she has never
seen
A single one of all us children yet.
And,” quickly pointing, “her name’s Mar-
garet,
And that’s my brother Jimmie. Margaret’s
two;
She’ll be three though, next April. What
are you
Reading?” “A story.” “May we sit
here?” “Do!”

Youth Riding

“ Or will we be a bother? Mother tells
Us not to bother strangers. The grass
smells

Good, don't it? Will you play
Blind man with us? ” “ Perhaps, some
other day.”

Then they ran shouting, dancing, where the
men

Were gravely making a flower bed,
And then

The gardener, scowling, walked to me and
said,

“ Lady, don't let your children go
Over there where the men are digging.” I
Stared at him, saying nothing in reply.

I know

That it is very wrong to act a lie,
But still I looked at him, and made no sign.
I wanted him to think that they were mine!

Youth Riding

The children straggled back, and played;
then heard

The stories that I knew, and scarcely stirred.

I caught up Margaret in a little ball

And kissed her face — child faces are so
small!

The rounded mouths! The little curious
shape

Of the soft ears, and the curls in the nape

Of the proud baby necks! Their arms are
white . . .

And Jimmie put his curls upon my knee

And Geraldine came closer bashfully

And pressed against me. Jimmie hurt my
feet

By leaning on them. Margaret snuggled
tight.

— I had forgotten children felt so sweet —

AN OLD TALE

The princess sleeps
 And her hair grows long.
And her birds sleep
 Each with a song
Stuck in his throat;
 And over her bower
 Hour after hour
The buds sleep too.
The old cook sleeps.
 And the quiet braids
 Of the serving maids
Are gold in the sun.
 And in the yard
 The knights that guard
Sleep, every one;
 And, near the throne

Youth Riding

The captains tall
Are sleeping all
 As though out in stone;
Each cardinal
 Sleeps; and the king
 And the queen, with a ring
Of pages round.

And the world spins round
 And the princess sleeps.

Thrust after thrust
 A prince hews strong —
At the hedge, and his hair,
And his face are fair.
(He is not the man
 Who will waken the princess,
His eyes will be gone
 And his bones will lie

Youth Riding

And catch the light
 When the prince rides by
Whose kiss will stir
The world and her.
He is only one
 Of the hundred men
Who will dream of the princess,
 Die, and then
Be a pathway white
For the last brave knight
To lead him straight
Where her lips await.)

And he sings,
And he feels the stings
 Of the thorns,
And he cries,
 To his page,
“ Courage, lad!
Hew on and thrust.

Youth Riding

If God is just
 We shall wake her
 And take her
Home to our kingdom.
You will be squire to her,
Walk at her bridle —
 She will be smiling
 And speaking out shyly
All that her heart holds,
 And singing a little
 For gladness of waking.
And I shall make Life
 Bow on its knees to her;
I shall make Life
 Bow on its knees to her —
Hew on and thrust!
If God is just,
 We shall find her
 And wake her
 And take her home.”

Youth Riding

In its iron hands

For miles around

A silence keeps

The forest deeps.

And the world spins round.

— And the princess sleeps.

PART V

TWO DREAMS DWELL IN HER EYES

Two dreams dwell in her eyes,
I cannot see them there,
But bow, in humble wise,
My head in prayer.

Two songs sing in her eyes,
I cannot hear them sing,
But, ah, I hold my breath
With listening.

CHOSEN

Girlish wise, she and I
Walked together. Death came by.

Death has passed and chosen her;
And she does not speak or stir;

She who loved to call and run
Shall not bare her head to sun,

Shall not hear the triumphing
Of the birds another Spring.

She must sleep beneath the ground.
— In my heart unworthily
I pray thanks that it was she
That his groping fingers found —

THE RIDERS X

Life is on a swift horse, and Youth is on a
fleet,

Beauty rides with spur and whip, and noth-
ing stays.

Snatch my hand, and pull me close, and make
them beat,

Your heart and my heart, a few small days!

Let the quarrels go now, the explaining word;
Let the treasured griefs drop down like
sand.

What are our best toys, when Their hoofs are
heard?

Put the words behind us, and touch my
hand.

Youth Riding

Mighty are the steeds and swift, wild the
steeds that bear

The Three on the highroad where the small
stones fly.

If your face hide at my neck, my eyes hide
in your hair,

We shall never know, then, Who has rid-
den by!

PASSERBY

From youth's high casement to the street
Look down, my sweet,
With pitying eyes at Time and Death,
Two bent old men who soon must die;
While you and I
Draw lusty breath —

PART VI

SONGS OF A GIRL

I

The buds
Coming to color
Make me weep.
For my own brown cloak
Has never been broken.
Spring, rend me!

II

The hummings of the street,
Their whisperings,
And the moon
White above me —
These, and the beating of my heart
Make me glad —

Youth Riding

III

The moon
Strikes my hand
Across my face as I lie.
And the pain of it
Keeps me from sleeping.

IV

Rainsound, sunset, and night,
Clear skies, and the falling of water —

Who would seek love?

V

What is love?

Love is when you touch me,
Love is the noise of stars singing as they
march,

Youth Riding

Love is a voice of worlds glad to be together.
What is love?

VI

There is a strong wall about me to protect me,
It is built of the words you have said to me.

They are swords about me to keep me safe,
They are the kisses of your lips.

Before me goes a shield to guard me from
harm,
It is the shadow of your arms between me and
danger.

VII

We walked alone through the long corridors
of living,
Our footfalls echoing;
And then we came

Youth Riding

By opposite doors
To the great hall
Of each other's presence.

VIII

For long
Locked shields within me
Withstood the onslaught of your words.
Then came your kiss
Like an arrow shot cunningly upward —

IX

See, I lead you to my heart.
It is a winding way, the way to my heart,
It is thorn beset and very long,
It is walled and sentineled,
And none could ever find the way alone.
So take my hand, and I will lead you to my
heart.

Youth Riding

X

Touch me, and I am yours.
I do not know why —

XI

Your kiss
Is on my face
Like the first snow
On bewildered grass —

XII

Your hand and mine
Hold converse together.
We do not know what they are saying.

Although we listen,
Eager eavesdroppers,
We cannot understand
What they are saying —

Youth Riding

XIII

I feel your heart beating in your hands as they
 touch me ;
I feel your breath
Sobbing against my hair.
Oh, put your mouth on mine and leave it so —

XIV

That leaning tree was once a girl, and heard
A man's heart next her own. Remembering
She holds her arms across the moon for us —

XV

Our hearts lie so close
 That when your heart trembles
 Mine will be afraid.

Our hearts beat so near
 That when your heart stirs
 Mine will hear it.

Youth Riding

Our hearts speak so loud
That all the world must know —

XVI

Of sticks and leaves
We made an image of love
In play.
And then the image came to life
And seized us —

XVII ✕

We two — we are young!
We have lips to sing,
To sing and kiss.

We two, we are glad!
We have hearts that beat,
That beat — and break.

XVIII

Take this kiss and wear it,

Youth Riding

A shield that will ward off
My words that might hurt you —

XIX

Within the little house
Of my great love for you,
This safe and happy house,
I sit and sing, while all the world goes by.

Within the house that is my love for you
No harm can come, nor any thought of fear;
There is no danger that can cross the
threshold.

You did not build this house
Nor I;
But God the Carpenter —

XX

Your eyes are two miracles,

Youth Riding

And I who have seen them,
Believe.

XXI

Perhaps
God, planting Eden,
Dropped a seed
Within Time's neighbor plot
That grew to be
This hour?

XXII

Like an artist
Who had finished a masterpiece
And is almost afraid,
You passed your finger
Tremblingly
Over my lips
Outlining their curves
In the darkness.

Youth Riding

And when you felt them smile
You kissed the smile out
And forced hunger upon them —

XXIII

The moments
Of our being tired of one another
Are the whetstone
Against which Life holds
The knife of our loving.

XXIV

Your arms can speak
More readily than your voice.
Your shoulder touching mine tells breathless
news.

XXV

Birds,
And leaves falling in Autumn,

Youth Riding

Have tried to teach me sadness,
But they have only taught me joy.
Perhaps it is you,
Come to bring joy to me,
Who shall show me sadness at the last?

XXVI

I hear our hearts together
Like one clock
Ticking our lives away.
Could not some other
Have reminded us of death?
Why must it be
Our own hearts
In the first hour
That they have beat together?

XXVII

Life is a dagger
With no hilt.

Youth Riding

As you tighten your arms about me
You only drive the two ends deeper
Into your heart
And mine.

XXVIII

I bend and touch the torches in your eyes;
Their flame lights all the little room called
life.

XXIX

The wonder of your arm about me,
Of your face close enough to touch,
Of your soft breathing —

What can God show me
When I am dead
That can make me marvel?

THE PROPOSAL

The carved chair is angry with me.
See how straight and stiff it is;
It disapproves
Because I have on my green slippers
And because I have danced a hole in my
 stocking,
And perhaps, too, because I am happy.

The mirror loves me;
And so I bend to kiss it
Where my own lips show leaning to meet me.
The mirror understands
Because it has seen into the hearts of many
 women,
And I shall be a woman soon.

Youth Riding

Swaying curtains, you are not more beautiful
Than I,

You are not more graceful

Nor does the wind curl its fingers about you
more readily.

You sway and dream.

Even so do I sway in the wind of life, and
dream —

Fire on the hearth,

That do you know?

I am very young,

And you have lived through the ages.

Tell me.

— But perhaps I would not believe, after
all —

Great carved lions

Over my mantel

You have guarded me well.

Youth Riding

Portrait of a kissed lady,
Portrait of a man who is growing old,
Portrait of a child who would rather be
 playing —

Portraits of dead people,
Do you live again when you see me?
Do you remember, too?

Square ceiling,
You have kept the sky from me for a long
 time,
But now I have found the sky.

Walls, your arms have held me close,
But soon other arms shall hold me.

Shadows playing in the room,
Leaping, clutching at one another,
You are too young to understand.

Youth Riding

Romp, shadows!
When the fire goes,
You shall not play any more —

COURTING

This Sunday evening
In small town parlors, and in country lanes,
Upon porch steps, or in some soft apartment,
How many pulses almost break the wrist
They beat in with their outcry!
How many patient clocks in quiet rooms
This hour
Guard while the world is made anew
By two hands touching —
How many shy and slender words
Are broken by the brute strength of a kiss!

What seekers are finding God
In some man's eyes, some woman's finger-
tips,

Youth Riding

Hearing His will in broken, whispered words,
Their own words and another's —

In all the world
What throngs of men and women
On this His holy day
Are doing God's work —

— As you and I are —

WIFE

You are a rope
That binds me to a desk,
That ties me by the wrist
To its chair.

They two,
The desk and chair
Alone of all the world
Hear my ideals
And my beliefs
And my thoughts about things.
In the window.
There is a sky
With roofs denting it.
Under the roofs are the people
Who ought to hear

Youth Riding

What the two
The desk and chair
Greedily lap up.

— I do not love the desk and chair
It is the rope that makes me talk to them.

PART VII

RESTAURANT TABLES

The little tables in restaurants
That are made for lovers to talk across,
The eager little tables
Would have much to tell each other
If they could meet.

Some have seen a kiss
Given in a glance.
Others have seen moments made
Which will last forever.

A red, mother-of-pearl, table in San Francisco
On which rest two cups without handles,
And on which tea is spilt,
Could tell of young lovers quarrelling,

Youth Riding

And with rude, quick, hands breaking all their
 sweetest memories
So that the bitterness inside oozes forth.

A table in an uptown hotel
Stiff with crystal and cut flowers,
Prim with an array of forks and glasses
Seeming placed in their spheres by the music
 that is near,
Could tell of words like budding seeds
Breaking through the hard, frozen, ground
 of youth
And springing to sudden sunlight.

— And the little rough wooden table
In George's on Sixth Avenue
Knows what you said to me
Last evening.

NEW YORK

THE SUBWAY

New York is a mother

Goadng

Prodding

Spurring

Her children on to achievement.

Only here does she show them any tenderness,

Here, where she folds them in her arms,

And lets them rest against her breast

An instant,

Before she flings them out into the battle
again.

FIFTH AVENUE BUS

Let us get on the back of this green beetle

And see the world

On our way to the office.

Youth Riding

The beetle sways
As if it were trying to brush us off.
It blunders along the streets
Like a blind thing
Finding its way
By some miracle.
It stops
And starts again.
It creeps on down the street
Thinking its own thought
While we sit on its back
And see the world.
We can look down at the faces on the side-
walk
And at the black shiny tops of hansom;
We can see into second stories
Of all the buildings.
We know their secrets.

The white faces turn unseeingly up to us;

Youth Riding

The roofs look indifferently down;
And the green beetle
Like a beast in a fairy tale,
Bears us on its back
That we may see the world.

LOWER BROADWAY

The great buildings
Stand patiently
And stretch high their arms,
Holding up the sky
Lest it sag
And let all heaven down upon our heads.

TELEPHONING

Past all the tangled noises of the streets,
Past the long blocks of hate and trade and
greed,
Into this sweating, swearing office comes
Your voice;
It is as low and cool and sweet

Youth Riding

As though you stood beside me
In some garden
And as you talked, touched roses,
And looked down
To where vine tendrils swayed against your
dress.

It seems
That if I turn my head — so — I would see
You standing here and smiling,
That if I stretched my arm out
I could lay
My fingers on your throat
And feel you say
My name —

A NEW YORK GRAVEYARD

Rows of men and women
Resting,
Democratically crowded together,
As if this were some subway

Youth Riding

Where they relax for a moment
And close their eyes, wearily,
(Listening always for the name of their
station)
Where they rest, shoulder to unknown
shoulder,
Before pushing out into the light and air
again
To buy and sell —

THREE POEMS

DEDICATED TO:
DIAGHILEFF'S BALLET Russe.

WASLAV NIJINSKY

You have run
Into the market place of our thoughts
And with a ribbon
Overturned the vendors' stands.
You have scattered
The loaves of bread
Which were heaped in the wire basket.

You have entered
Slowly
In your brown monkish garments
And then pranced impishly.
You have come laden with scrolls
And you have thrown the scrolls upon the
ground.
You have cast off the scholar's garb

Youth Riding

And danced whitely
In the moonlight.

Alone in the square
After the affrighted ones have fled
You dance forever,
Like a green moonbeam,
Like a mad one,
Like laying hold upon Spring.

The country youths and the maidens
That are in us
Watch you;
Then fling themselves
Into the pool of your abandon.
There are no others in the market place,
These have covered up their eyes
Behind the windows;
While you dance
With the youths and maidens

Youth Riding

Upon the mauve paving stones.
Then come,
Like a clock striking,
The ones of doom.
Between their black rows you stand
Alone,
Their eyes of death upon you.
You gaze afraid.

Then you fling a gay mocking dance in their
faces.

And the lifted hand
Gives your sentence

They slay you,
These thoughts that you mocked.

The market place fills slowly
With sobbing.

Youth Riding

The peasants gaze
Upon your dead body.

Then, breaking the dark,
You run, a spirit,
Among them,
And your laughter and theirs
Is like colored lights
Flung into the sky.

In the market place of our hearts
You will be slain
Many times
And always
Again
You will run
Into the quietness
Tossing colored balls into the sky —

ENTR'ACTE SYMPHONIQUE

The music is telling the crowd
What that girl wishes
She is crying
It is cruel
The music is telling aloud
What that old woman has hoarded
And kept hidden
For sixty years
Could it not let her die in peace
With no one suspecting?
It is showing
The yearnings
Of the people in that box —
Will it not cease —
And saying what this child would like to be

Youth Riding

That old man can never hold his head up
again

Now that his secret is discovered

The barriers we have taken years to erect
Are useless now

We can not meet each other's eyes

We who sit in this theater

There is no peace

Because of the music knowing

We have no sanctuary

The music is slipping its sly fingers in among
us

And pulling out

From secret places what is there.

What we have searched for and could not
discover

Within our hearts, it flaunts before us now.

Youth Riding

I turn my face away

I close my eyes

That it may not see me.

I feel the uneasiness in your shoulder

As it barely touches mine

That tells me you are shrinking from it also.

What if it should find

That we love one another?

PRINCE IGOR

(Adolf Bohm)

She was a Back Bay school-teacher
She sat in the front row of one of the boxes;
And wore rimmed glasses;
And she was watching
With an expression of distaste upon her fea-
tures.

It was Boston looking at Russia.
The music clamored
And howled
And tore
And made the dancers mad.
The men with their bows and arrows
Ran and panted.
They stood in a circle

Youth Riding

And beat their bows upon the ground.

One of the dancers

With the slant eyes of the Slav

With the cat grace of the Mongolian

Glided through the lines of bowmen

Swayed from side to side

And sank inarticulate

Upon the ground.

She leaned forward, her chin in her palms.

In her face

Was rage at her own dumbness

All the rushing torrents within her

Dammed, looked out from her eyes.

The dancers ran in circles

They threw their bows into the air and caught

them.

There was ugly ecstasy in her face.

They stamped upon the ground.

Her teeth were set together

Like a dog's snarling.

Youth Riding

The dancers whirled and spun.
Her eyes were savage, thwarted,
Filled with a lust to kill, to make.
The dancers sprang and leaped.
The music taunted and beat and stung.
The dancers shook their bodies from side to
side.

Her eyes were like the yell of a savage;
In her face were tribal dances,
Tribal wooings.

The music rose to larger joy
It pulled the dancers up with it
Into frenzy.

Their twisted bodies
Their writhing features
Cried out louder than the music.
The strongest dancer ran
Down through the lines of bowmen
And, kneeling in agony,
Shook his head from side to side

Youth Riding

Then, raising his bow
Drew the arrow to the head
And shot it into the sky
Her teeth were bared
Her eyes half closed
The curtain fell
And she went home
To teach arithmetic.

THE DANCER

I watch the dancer,
Bending,
Lithely stooping,
Leaping, rippling,
Her motions changing
As though she were a song of many notes;
Her white robes swaying,
Her scarves like water under wind;
Her face held up to joy
As a leaf to sunlight;
Her arms yearning and crying out for beauty,
Reaching up
And pulling down beauty upon her head,
Then flinging it from her, to our outstretched
 hands.

But it is you
Calm, restrained, motionless,

Youth Riding

Sitting beside me in your orchestra seat,
 watching her also,
Is it you whom I see dancing with such
 ecstasy,
Tortured with music
Mad with motion
Giving yourself to your joy;
It is your throat, upon whose whiteness the
 light falls,
Your transfigured face I see
Held up to gladness
As a leaf to sunlight,
And your lifted arms
Asking, and holding beauty.

You

Seeing my tranced eyes fixed upon her
Are a little jealous.
— You need not be,
Beloved —

PART VIII



PORTRAIT

You laugh

And ride life as if it were a broncho.

As it rears and tries to kill you

You only cling tighter

And laugh.

Other men life may have thrown and
trampled

But you will break it to your will

And make it carry you wherever you wish
to go.

A MARRIAGE

Walking along a mountain trail at night
with you,

Never knowing when a rock will turn be-
neath our feet

Or the loose earth slip

And plunge us into the half-seen precipice
below —

Our life is like that.

We cling to each other's hands tightly;

We walk cautiously;

And are too frightened

To be unkind.

SWORD FERNS

I lie upon the deep moss,
My cheek making a rounded hole.

The sword ferns about me are so thick
That I can not see the earth;
They are bending and tossing
Like green scimitars
In a wild battle;
Crowding something to death.
It is my other self that they are stabbing.
What was I is dead;
They have killed it.

This thing that lies in the moss
Making soft depressions with its rounded
body

Youth Riding

Is a wood nymph

Born of the moss and the earth and the
leaves;

Kin to the trees and the peaks and the quick
streams,

Lover of the wind —

HOUSES

Dogwood tree,
Hemlock tree,
Sword fern,
Thimbleberry bush —
Are you glad that you are not walls?
White sky
With nine blue clouds,
Are you proud not to be a ceiling?
Round gray rocks
At the edge of the broken mountain stream,
Are you breathless with relief
That you are not chairs?
Ah, stream, if you were a carpet!
Laugh, be triumphant!

Wind, wind, you and I

Youth Riding

Who live in this green mountain,
And shout, and are silent,
Let us purse our lips and blow
Until all the houses in the world
Topple over and flee
Like dried leaves
Tumbling in new grotesque terror.

PROSPECTORS

It's not the gold. Why, any one might know
If he would only stop to think of it,
It's not the gold.— We take the trail, each
 one
Beside cold, thirst, and fear and solitude —
We think it's for the gold.— We say it is.
Sometimes we die, too, when a tunnel goes,
(They're rotten timbered, half of these black
 holes),
Or when the cold has got us and we're glad.—
We go out, thinking still it was the gold.
It isn't, though; I think it's only that
We've got to prove what's in us; to ourselves
Or God, perhaps, or may be to the mountains
They stand and leer at us through all our
 struggle.

Youth Riding

We've got to prove it to them. So we take
Our packs, and keep on stumbling in the hills
In places where there never was a trail
And never will be, maybe, till we've been
Part of the trees and bushes for a while.
The mountains try to break us, and we put
Our strength to theirs . . .

The mountains always win.

A MINING TOWN

When I am bravest,
Not in dreams, but glimpsed through my
work,

I see you again, town of my childhood;
— Eager, flaming town,
Confident, alert,

Knowing that to-morrow will bring you
gold —

Town of the mountainside
With glaciers above you, and snow peaks;
With the dark, still lake at your feet,
And pines at your door —

Down your streets the miners go laughing;
And the old prospectors gather
To talk each one about a claim in the hills

Youth Riding

That will make him rich
Some day.

Death is quick and sudden in the mining town
And therefore life is joyous.

Here is a man who limps
He was caught in a snowslide;
But chiefly the hills do their work swift and
clean;

That gap in the circle? — a bear on the trail,
and the men at the mine found his body
and brought it home.

That silence where a laugh should be?
A cave-in, in the tunnel — and, pinned under
rocks, he watched Death crawl in to him
— and we who knew him, know that he
laughed as he watched.

The other vacant keg? The fuse was too
short, the explosion came too soon, by a
second.

Youth Riding

That is why they laugh so loud, these miners.
Life is a game of chance,
You can lose only once!
So laugh and treat while you're winning!

The gaunt old peaks stand looking down,
Waiting,
They seem to reach the shadows, their arms,
closer for their prey.

The lake looks hungrily up,
It shows its white teeth, laughing, and calls
out,
Slapping words at the shore; about the men it
holds
In its dark arms, and kisses endlessly with its
wet mouth
Down in the shadows.
Men lie there that came through a hundred
dangers.
To find this blue death.

Youth Riding

Was ever child of yours afraid, little Town?
They all have the eyes of you, eyes that see
 far,
And therefore smile.

I am your child.
I too have your hands of daring
And your heart of reckless joy.

I shut my eyes and see you.
I seem to stand
Again upon your hillside.
Breathing in the biting cold
And the danger,
I stand glad, uplifted,
Like a boy shouting because it is Spring;
I see again your lake below me
And your peaks above,
I touch a tamarack with my hands
And hear speech of the great woods around
 me;

Youth Riding

I am one with the north, one with the hills,
 one with danger,
As I laugh, and climb.

.

I shall remember you,
Eager town,
Strong, alert, flaming with joy and snatch-
 ing the adventure,
I, who am your child, will remember!

And I shall never be afraid
Even of life;
And who that does not fear Life can fear
 Death
Which is so much a lesser thing?

THE END

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